

Equipment and Stores.—The situation regarding equipment and stores is far from satisfactory.

Financial limitations have made it impossible to build up an adequate reserve of equipment and stores or to maintain those reserves that existed.

These stores cannot be obtained in New Zealand, nor would they be available until at least six months after the outbreak of war.

Apart from the provision of stores, a considerable amount of leeway has to be made up in carrying out alterations and additions to existing equipment. Shortage of skilled personnel and small stores, and inadequate workshops and machinery, together with the increased demands made upon them, are responsible for the present situation.

Unfortunately financial limitations permits of no progress being made in remedying this position.

An issue of boots has been made to all ranks of the Territorial Force during the past year and has proved satisfactory in every way.

7. STORE BUILDINGS AND WORKSHOPS.

The Ordnance Depots are situated at Ngaruawahia, Trentham, and Burnham.

The storage accommodation at Ngaruawahia and Burnham is reasonably satisfactory. At Trentham, where the greater quantity of reserve stores is held, the store buildings consist of the wooden hutments erected to accommodate troops during the war. Most of these buildings still have a considerable "life," but the lay-out is uneconomical in staff and administration and insufficient to accommodate any considerable increase in quantity of stores held. The stores required on mobilization cannot, under present conditions, be segregated and laid out as they should be.

It is proposed, when money is available, to erect a modern store building at Trentham which will increase the storage available and anticipate the deterioration of the present wooden buildings.

The principal workshop is at Trentham. Small workshops exist at North Head, Auckland, and Burnham, Canterbury. These workshops carry out repair and maintenance work on guns, howitzers, vehicles, machine guns, rifles, optical and other instruments, and miscellaneous small items. A marked increase in this work is to be expected with the advent of the new armament for coast defences and other equipment.

A considerable extension of the workshop at Trentham is overdue, but cannot be undertaken with the money available in the vote.

8. RIFLE RANGES.

Rifle ranges are required in several districts, and reconnaissances are proceeding. No improvement can be expected under present financial conditions, and a considerable expenditure in this connection must be faced in the near future.

Only the bare essential maintenance work has been carried out on existing ranges during the year.

9. DEFENCE BUILDINGS: OFFICES, DRILL HALLS, BARRACKS, ETC.

Existing Buildings.—During the past few years, expenditure on existing buildings has been confined to the most urgent maintenance work only. The buildings have now reached a state where serious deterioration will result unless considerable attention is paid to them. Several new drill halls are required, and offices generally, particularly those at the main centres, are inadequate, badly furnished, and of very poor appearance. It has not been possible to make any improvements in the position.

New Buildings.—In accordance with the policy of extending the defences of the Dominion, considerable progress has been made during the year with the erection of various buildings. At Fort Dorset, Wellington, large barracks to accommodate single personnel of the R.N.Z.A. have practically been completed. Stables and offices, and buildings to accommodate anti-aircraft guns, vehicles, and equipment have been erected. Surfacing, roading, and drainage have still to be done, and certain buildings, such as a small hospital and additional quarters, are required to complete the plan.

At Narrow Neck, Auckland, buildings similar to those at Fort Dorset are in course of erection.

At Burnham Camp a small building is required to accommodate single civilian employees of the Ordnance Depot, as no local facilities exist for their obtaining such accommodation.

10. RIFLE CLUBS.

The free issue of ammunition to rifle clubs and the sales at reduced rates have been continued on the same increased scale as last year. This increase was made when signs of deterioration were observed in the older ammunition, and now that the stocks of such ammunition are nearing exhaustion it will be necessary to revert to the previous scale.

The issue of ammunition of later date of manufacture should remove any cause for complaint on the part of the clubs on account of the issue of ammunition which at times showed certain defects, but which was unavoidable owing to the necessity of building up a reserve of reliable ammunition. Such ammunition for rifle practice was issued to both the Territorial Force and to rifle clubs without discrimination between them. When any doubt existed as to the serviceability of ammunition, it has been reserved for practice with machine guns and light automatics, where it could be used without any risk to personnel.

The numbers and strengths of rifle clubs are shown in Appendix I (d).

The National Rifle Association held its annual meeting at Trentham from 1st to 6th March, 1935.